

Tremewan, W. G. & Manley, W. B. L. 1965. Notes on Species of the Genus *Zygaena* Fabricius (Lep., Zygaenidae) from South-west France and Spain, with descriptions of New Subspecies. *Entomologist's Rec. J. Var.* **77**: 8, 9.

Inverness-shire in 1967

By Commander G. W. HARPER, R.N. Retd., F.R.E.S.

The fond hope for a recovery in entomological health in 1967, which I expressed as usual last year has been duly and dramatically destroyed! In order to be quite sure there was no obscure fault in the trap, I ran a second trap out of sight of the first for about three months of the six, and the results with it were broadly comparable as regards numbers and variations from night to night. The score for the same six months, April to September 1967, from the one main trap was only 2,500, no less than 1,000 fewer than the previous lowest record in 1966.

The sorry story begins with the onset of another early winter in November 1966, a stormy December with a perfect White Christmas in bright sunshine, followed by a heavy snowfall at Hogmanay. This was however the last real snow and the main winter was very open with very persistent but only moderate frost. A mild spell in the second half of January caused the first *Phigalia pedaria* Fab. to emerge and sit on one of my birches on 15th, equal to the earliest previous date I have recorded here; this was followed by a fair number later in the month and in early February, which month ended in a series of fierce blizzards of wet snow which never lasted long.

March came in like the proverbial lion with mild storm force gales (Beaufort Scale force 10) together with the worst floods for many years in the Spey valley, continuing most of the month. Plovers, thrushes and oyster-catchers arrived in the first week. During the brief intervals between gales I worked my m.v. trap in my birch spinney, the first *Achlya flavicornis* L. and *Orthosia incerta* Hufn. appearing in it on 21st. A visitor, Mr E. A. Sadler, reported *Brachyonica nubeculosa* Esp. and *Poecilopsis lapponaria* Bdv. on 25th, but I did not see the former at all and the latter not until the next month, a few elderly females which had laid all their eggs!

April was mostly very cold and stormy with Easterly blizzards of snow and hail. A few sunny days in the middle of the month tempted a single *Aglais urticae* L. out of hibernation and the sallows into blossom the next week; these were well patronised by the common *Orthosias* and hibernators, but *Lampropteryx suffumata* Schf. was unusually abundant at the catkins.

May was ushered in by the traditional "lambing" snowstorm and frosts for the first week. A few sunny days followed, but apart from one or two *Isturgia carbonaria* Cl. none of the usual sun-lovers was seen. However, the minute trap catches were graced by two male *Odontotia carmelita* Esp., the first appearing on the same day, 12th, as last year. The month ended with a little more sunshine and the emergence of a few *Pieris napi* L. and *Anthocaris cardamines* L. But *Callophrys rubi* L. was again very scarce this year.

June began with the continuation of very cold nights, so that light trap catches varied between nil and seven until 13th, when double figures were at last reached! However, gloriously sunny days began on 10th,

by which time *Argynnis euphrosyne* L. was well out and soon flew freely among the violets growing among the scree boulders of my local hillside. On 14th I had one of the most remarkable Hymenopterous experiences of my life. I had noticed during the previous three days, the beginning of the warm spell, that there were a good number of Queen wasps, *Vespa vulgaris*, busily at work paper-making on fence posts for their nests, and tried to reduce their numbers. In the early evening of 14th, whilst having a drink with a friend on his verandah, I noticed the queens swarming to the fresh buds of a Cotoneaster bush under the window, and I succeeded in netting no less than twenty-four in half an hour; I saw very few worker wasps later in the year. The sunny spell ended after only eight days on 18th, and our summer was virtually over. On this last hot day I visited the solitary and most northerly British colony of our rarest local Butterfly, *Cupido minimus* Fuess. to find it in very good heart, flying in very good numbers, in both sexes. Later in July, larvae were plentiful also and easy to find. This lovely little species was certainly one of the few bright spots in this depressingly poor season. A single immigrant *Vanessa atalanta* L. was also seen in an Aviemore garden on 18th June.

July was a very stormy, cold, wet month, so that the usual summer common butterflies appeared slowly and in small numbers. I did not see the first *Aricia artaxerxes* Fab. until 6th, and this species remained scarce again this year, nor was *Argynnis aglaia* L. at all abundant, appearing first as late as 22nd. One fairly mild night was that of 15th, when I sampled the high moorlands of Dalwhinnie with sugar and m.v. Moths were fairly numerous, both at sugar and light, no less than four *Apamea exulis* spp. *assimilis*, all damaged by the blustery weather, came to the latter. Light trap catches continued miserably small, with the year's record large total to date of 42 moths on the last night, 31st.

August produced a mixed bag of weather, with a fair amount of sun, especially in the third week. By 6th, *Erebia aethiops* Esp. was well out and particularly plentiful at Aviemore, where on this day in a grassy dell with many Ragwort plants I have never before seen such a beautiful concentration of this lovely butterfly, between ten and twenty individuals feeding avidly on each flower clump, the vivid females emerging all around, and many pairs in cop. The usual summer moths were about, but trap catches remained poor, though a maximum of fifty a night was reached occasionally! Finding myself in Elgin on 22nd I took my portable 20 watt m.v. tube to the cliff tops near Hopeman in fond hope of taking *Euschesis orbona* Hb. but was only rewarded by some fresh *E. comes* Hb., *Amathes agathina* Dup., and the local melanic form of *Caradrina blanda* Schf. Returning home, the month ended with a little more sunshine and one or two *Aglais urticae* in my garden but no migrants, not even one *Plusia gamma* L.!

September also produced some pleasant sunny days with rather less of the frustrating high winds which have been a pronounced feature of our weather recently. The normally common autumn species were seen in well below normal numbers, the Oporinias in particular were actually rare, especially *O. autumnata* Bork., and larvae too were very scarce and the few I found heavily parasitized.

October saw the virtual end of the season; it was the coldest, wettest and windiest for years. The hills were snow covered on 4th, and snow reached the low ground on 18th, which was followed by a mild, wet week

in which both *Operophtera brumata* L. and *O. fagata* Scharf. emerged with a fair number of *Erannis aurantiaria* Hb. So ended another disappointing year.

Nedaich, Newtonmore, Inverness-shire. 15.i.68.

Robert Dick Centenary Exhibition, Thurso, Saturday, 16th July 1966

By I. R. P. HESLOP

Robert Dick, 1810-1866, was an entomologist, and also my greatgrand-uncle. Some details are given below, but a very full biography was written by Samuel Smiles. This fact speaks in itself for the calibre of the subject, though unfortunately the book is now better known to the Scots than to the English.

Dick's collection of all orders of insects, taken exclusively in Caithness (the whole of which county he regularly covered on foot), is known to have included 240 species of Macrolepidoptera. Samuel Smiles saw his entomological collection, in a neglected state, about 1875; but it has since disappeared. It is chiefly as a pioneer geologist and botanist that Robert Dick is famous, but his influence on the study of entomology was undoubtedly very great; and I commend this aspect of his work to possible further research. Unfortunately his own name was not always credited with the prodigious amount of work that he did in all fields: and Samuel Smiles alludes to an instance of an extensive assembly of geological specimens being connected with the name of another geologist without any mention of the fact that every one of them had been collected by Robert Dick. He was almost quixotically generous with both specimens and information.

Robert Dick's house at Thurso is reverently preserved. His birth-place at Tullibody (January 1810), despite previous promises of preservation, has recently been pulled down.

Dick died on 24th December 1866, being accorded a public funeral and a splendid monument; and his centenary year was commemorated by means of an extensive exhibition during Thurso's gala week in the summer. This exhibition was the product of the devoted and protracted labours of a group of local geologists and botanists; and as a result thereof some additional information on and relics of Robert Dick came to light. One of these latter was an actual photograph of him, the only likeness previously known having been the pen and ink portrait which forms the frontispiece of Samuel Smiles's work. The exhibition attracted a good deal of attention; and visitors came to it from all parts of the world, even from England. Many exhibits, comprising some of Dick's original specimens, were lent from various sources including the Royal Scottish Museum. The exhibition was honoured by a visit from the Queen Mother.

As Robert Dick's great grand-nephew, I had the honour of being invited to perform the opening ceremony at Thurso on Saturday, 16th July 1966, for which purpose I made a rail journey of 800 miles from my school in Hampshire. On the afternoon of that day, accompanied by the local geologists, I visited the site on Holburn Head where Dick had obtained both geological and entomological specimens. Here, also, on the bleak and rugged headland overlooking the wild sea, I had the pleasure